

Message Text

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USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 3227

EO 11652 GDS
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, SNAR, HO
SUBJECT: NARCOTICS SCANDAL CHRONOLOGY

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 3185

1. FOLLOWING IS A SHORT CHRONOLOGY OF HONDURAS NARCOTICS SCANDAL, WHICH HAS HELD PUBLIC ATTENTION HERE FOR SEVEN MONTHS. EMBASSY BELIEVES THIS SUMMARY MAY BE USEFUL IN UNDERSTANDING UNFOLDING SAGA. WHILE IT WAS ORIGINALLY VIEWED AS NO MORE THAN A SORDID CRIMINAL MATTER, THE INCREASING INDICATIONS OF NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING AND POSSIBLE HIGH-LEVEL GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT HAVE GIVEN THIS CASE A POTENTIAL FOR CAUSING THE GOVERNMENT SERIOUS PROBLEMS.

--DECEMBER 1, 1977: MARIO AND MARY FERRARI, ALLEGED NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS, ARE KIDNAPPED. WHILE THERE IS SOME PRESS PLAY AND SPECULATION, THE ISSUE SOON BECOMES RELATIVELY DORMANT; UNTIL

--MARCH 5, 1978: SMALL TIME MERCHANT CARLOS FELIPE MADRID
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AND DANILO ZUNIGA ARE CAPTURED, TORTURED, THROWN INTO A RIVER, AND LEFT FOR DEAD, AFTER HAVING SPOKEN OF HAVING INFORMATION ON THE FERRARIS. MADRID SURVIVES, ACCUSES SEVERAL PERSONS AND ALLEGES POSSIBLE POLICE INVOLVEMENT (TEGUCIGALPA 1180);

-- MARCH 8: ARMED FORCES CHIEF, GENERAL PAZ AND ARMY G-2
IN PRESS CONFERENCE DISCUSS FERRARI CASE, ACCUSE PRESS OF

SENSATIONALISM (TEGUCIGALPA 1243);

--MARCH 13: ARMED FORCES ACCUSE SAN PEDRO SULA DAILY "TIEMPO" OF INTENTIONAL CAMPAIGN TO DISCREDIT MILITARY INSTITUTION (TEGUCIGALPA 1311);

--MARCH 15: ONE OF ACCUSED FERRARI KIDNAPPERS, DIMAS REYES, ADMITS TO TAKING PART IN ABDUCTION, BUT MAINTAINS FERRARIS WERE SPIRITED AWAY TO COLOMBIA BECAUSE OF DESIRE FOR PERSONAL VENGEANCE BY RAMON MATTA, ALLEGED INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING BOSS (TEGUCIGALPA 1368);

--APRIL: CONTRADICTORY STORIES BY THOSE PERSONS PREVIOUSLY ARRESTED KEEPS PUBLIC INTEREST FOCUSED ON CASE (TEGUCIGALPA 1840);

--APRIL 22: CHIEF OF HONDURAN POLICE INTERPOL SECTION, LT. JUAN ANGEL BARAHONA, MAKES SENSATIONAL CHARGES OF HIGH-LEVEL MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING, FORCING THE SUPERIOR DEFENSE COUNCIL OF THE ARMED FORCES TO FACE ISSUE AND NOMINATE AN INVESTIGATING COMMISSION (TEGUCIGALPA 1963, 2036);

--MAY 22-25: "TIEMPO" EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MANUAL GAMERO'S INTERVIEWS IN COLOMBIA WITH RAMON MATTA, WHO WHITEWASHES HIMSELF, APPEAR IN "TIEMPO", PUBLIC INTEREST REMAINS HIGH (TEGUCIGALPA 2543);

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--JUNE 19: FERRARI BODIES FOUND IN DEEP WELL NEAR TEGUCIGALPA; SOME RUMORS OF DIVISIONS WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES ON HOW TO HANDLE THE SITUATION CIRCULATE (TEGUCIGALPA 2922);

--JUNE 24: ARMED FORCES COMMUNIQUE STATES THAT MILITARY INVESTIGATING COMMISSION ESTABLISHED APRIL 22 REPORTS NO MILITARY INVOLVEMENT, WARNS PRESS AND TURNS MATTER OVER TO THE COURTS (TEGUCIGALPA 3044);

--JULY 5: "TIEMPO" DIRECTOR GAMERO DETAINED (TEGUCIGALPA 3185).

2. COMMENT: CIVILIAN GROUPS HAVE JOKED ABOUT HOW THEY SHOULD THROW THE GOVERNMENT OUT FOR CORRUPTION--AS THEY MAINTAIN WOULD ALREADY HAVE HAPPENED IF THERE WERE A CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT-- BUT THERE IS A WIDESPREAD RECOGNITION THAT CHANGES, IF ANY, WILL COME ONLY FROM WITHIN THE MILITARY. WHILE THIS NARCOTICS SCANDAL IS NOT AN ISSUE WHICH SHOULD THREATEN THE STABILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT, THE HANDLING GIVEN IT BY THE ARMED FORCES, ESPECIALLY THEIR RECENT COMMUNIQUE, AND THE GAMERO DETENTION HAVE MADE THE SDC'S TASK MORE DIFFICULT.
JARAMILLO

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